



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FNHA Advises Communities to Prepare for Possible Spread of Coronavirus

Important Steps for Communities to Take

British Columbia's health system has a detailed plan in place should the coronavirus known as COVID-19 spread across the province.

It is important to remember that by the beginning of March there were only eight confirmed cases of the coronavirus in British Columbia. All of the eight cases so far identified in BC involve people who had recently traveled to an affected country, or who are close family contacts of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. There have been no cases reported in First Nations communities.

Bearing that in mind, please approach these preparations with calm in our hearts and trust in each other to avoid causing unnecessary anxiety in our communities.

However, there are a number of steps First Nations communities can take now to prepare for the possibility the virus spreads more widely:

- Review your existing Communicable Disease Emergency Plan (Pandemic Plan) and update it as needed. Make sure all of the contact information is correct and that people are aware of what is expected of them.
- Review the community's supply of essentials.
- Where there is one, check to see if the community health centre or nursing stations requires additional support to prepare for possible coronavirus patients.
- Train and prepare staff to cover for each other as people may need time off to care for their families or for themselves.
- Continue to follow the First Nations Health Authority communications channels for timely and reliable information on the outbreak.
- Involve the whole community in efforts to prevent the spread of the virus by sharing tips on how to prevent its spread, as well as how to recognize the symptoms in each other.

Band offices and other community organizations should consider taking the following measures to prevent the virus spreading in the workplace.

- Promote frequent hand washing with soap and water, use hand sanitizer.
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of door handles, washrooms and surfaces that are frequently touched is important.
- Recommend people sneeze and cough into a tissue or their elbow.
- Encourage people to stay home if they are sick.
- Where possible, allow and enable people to work from home.

Finally, take a look at the community's financial planning and consider budget implications should emergency funds be needed.

The FNHA will provide further updates as the situation evolves.

For all the latest information please go to:

www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus